

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee

Thank you for your service to our communities. School District 2 Board of Trustees is writing in support of SB 88 to revise and clarify school speed zone law.

In our role as trustees, representing the interests of families whose children enjoy the health, educational, and environmental benefits of walking or biking to school, we would like to bring to your attention some startling statistics.

Fatal injury occurs in only 5% of the cases when a pedestrian is hit at 20 mi/hr. A pedestrian has a 45% fatality rate when speeds are increased from 20 mi/hr to 25mi/hr, and a pedestrian has an 85% chance of death when hit at speeds of 40mi/hr. (Ashton and Mackay 1979).

In Montana, approximately 30% of all pedestrians and over 50% of all bicyclists injured or killed are under the age of 15. (*See Montana's Invisible Traffic Victims: A Preliminary Report on Pedestrian and Bicyclist Injuries in the Treasure State.*)

This correlates into children of school age walking to and from their neighborhood school. Of course, it also correlates with the age of the pedestrian or bicyclist and causation (e.g. younger child running into the road.) However, we believe the younger the child, the greater the responsibility to employ measures that remove probability.

Also, the impact may have a relationship to socioeconomics in that the greater number of children that walk to school in poverty stricken areas makes these populations particularly vulnerable.

Therefore, in an attempt to make our streets and neighborhoods as safe as possible for these vulnerable travelers, we, the school District 2 Board of Trustees and administration, urge your support of SB 88.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Aragon,
Legislative Liason
SD2 Board of Trustees